

**Informant: LMP-S1**  
**Interview Date: 01-21-01**  
**Interviewer: Claudia Hernandez**  
**First Transcriber: ????**  
**Revised by: Reyna Ronelli 03/06/02**

**Language: Spanish**  
**Format: Mini DV**

CH: He says that is the only thing he uses for his AIDS treatment. He says he's not good with taking herbal remedies. Even though he is a healer and provides herbal remedies for others, he's not comfortable using them himself, or he doesn't have a good reaction using them. So the only thing that he uses is iron shots.

Now we want to continue with the list, right? So we are going to continue with the list of illnesses and find out what you know about them and if you have used them. We left off with bronchitis.

S1: We already went over bronchitis.

CH: Oh, ok, never mind. How about stomach aches.

S1: We already went over that one.

CH: No we didn't. We talked about indigestion, diarrhea, and constipation but not just stomach aches.

S1: No, I don't really know....

CH: Did we talk about ulcers?

S1: Yes.

CH: Let's go back to remedies for stomach aches.

S1: One of the ways you can treat stomachaches is by preparing a tea made of spearmint (**yierba buena**) and vervain (**verbena**) tea. I don't know if you can get verbena here, but it is usually found out in the bush.

CH: You can find vervain (**verbena**) here.

S1: So you add plenty of boiled vervain (**verbena**). You can also take something called **incienso** (incense), not like church incense, but a plant called (**incienso**) which can be boiled and has an extremely bitter taste. If you are dealing with a stomachache caused by parasites, then you can use camphor (**alcanfor**) oil and use cotton balls moistened with the oil and alcohol to superficially place inside the ears like plugs. Because sometimes, when children have a lot of parasites they come out through here and there.

CH: But you couldn't place it there, right?

S1: Yes you can. It's most important to place the treatment on the bellybutton, and the soles of the feet.

CH: How much camphor to alcohol is used?

S1: For a bottle of alcohol you can use a small packet of camphor.

CH: So once the person goes to the bathroom, they get rid of the parasites, right?

S1: No, you don't get rid of them. This tea just gets rid of the pain. There are so many kinds of stomachaches that people don't know how to treat. In Guatemala there is this thing that we do that helps treat stomachaches- where one has a hot alcoholic drink.

CH: Like a Tequila drink or something like that?

S1: Yeah, a white alcoholic drink-a white liqueur, that is hot. It really gets rid of stomachaches. Something white. Also, if you rub the stomach area with a warm oil- this gets rid of the stomach pain.

CH: Around how many people come and ask you for a remedy to treat stomach aches- like the kind of pain you just mentioned?

S1: I don't have any clients that I treat for this problem. I just treat my children and relatives with this remedy. However, I do treat a lot of people that suffer from headaches and feel fatigued, or have problems with their lungs or liver.

CH: So the peppermint and vervain (**verbena**) tea is taken how many times a day?

S1: Two cups of tea during the day is enough.

CH: How do you treat infected wounds?

S1: You just wash the affected area with ragweed (**epazote**), salt, **arnica**, and (**cancerina**). It is an anti-inflammatory and it cleans up the wound.

CH: How many times a day?

S1: Usually around three times a day.

CH: It depends on how severe the wound is?

S1: Yes.

CH: Have you treated people with these kinds of problems?

S1: Not really. But if I were to cut myself right now, I would just take some coffee and sugar and place it in some container, burn some newspaper and apply it to the wound-to cover the wound. This is to cover the wound. You see if you are out in the bush and you are not carrying a first aid kit but you have coffee and sugar with you, then you can take the sugar and whatever kind of coffee, and you can mix it with burnt newspaper and use it as a band aide.

CH: But for infected wounds you would use ragweed (*epazote*)?

S1: Yes.

CH: Do you treat people for this kind of condition here?

S1: No, I've treated people in Guatemala for this but not here.

CH: So do you prepare the blend as you would normally prepare a tea?

S1: Yes.

CH: What are the measurements for each herb in making this tea?

S1: A small handful of ragweed (*epazote*).

C.H. talking to Jones: He said for infected wounds what he would use is ragweed (*epazote*/note: **it is unclear what epazote he is referring to, as there are two kinds**), (*cancerina*) and arnica-I don't know how to say this in English. You take all those three and he says you use like a tea amount-just enough to make a tea. You make a tea and then you take that and put it right on the wound, and that should keep it clean. You should do that three times during the day. He has not treated this illness here, only in Guatemala, and for himself, he says that if he happened to get like a cut right now then he would take coffee and sugar and a piece of newspaper or something and just burn the newspaper and take the ashes from the newspaper and mix it up with the coffee and the sugar, and apply that to his cut right away to stop the bleeding?

Jones: Did you get proportions?

CH: On that, he said just to take a bunch-just like for a tea. So I would think like the amount of a tea bag. He says there's no recent example of treatment.

Jones: High blood pressure, I think we talked about a while ago.

CH: Yeah, I think we did.

C. talking to S1: What about people that feel down and without energy-not that they feel sick but they are just suffering from loss of energy?

S1: What I do is I recommend a bath composed of seven plants, like (*??chica??*), spearmint (*yierba buena*), rosemary (*romero*), basil (*albahaca*), (*piruli?*), parsley (*perejil*)-all that stuff. What I do is I clean them with an egg, and I brush them/clean them off with the plants.

CH: With the plants?

S1: Yes, and I give them mineral salts that help to relax the person.

CH: When you use the plants for a bath do you use the same plants for brushing/cleansing the person?

S1: Yes.

CH: So they don't take any sort of tea. They only do the bath?

S1: No.

CH: Do you actually do this kind of treatment here?

S1: I do.

CH: Just for your family?

S1: For people. I get a lot of people that come to see me to get this done. I get a lot of people that come due to problems of stress and worries.

CH: Would you say that it was about 50% of the people you see?

S1: Yes.

CH: More women than men?

S1: No, I get both. I get people that spend a lot of time in bed, that do not have any desire to get up, and want to do nothing.

CH: What is the age range?

S1: From 25 to 30 years of age and up.

CH: Are they Latin, White, or what?

S1: Latin, White and Black people.

CH: All three, o.k. So what measurements do you use to prepare the bath?

S1: Just a handful of each thing.

CH: talking to Jones: So he says for a rundown feeling he would use like seven different plants: rosemary (**romero**) and some others-I can't recall. But he says that what he recommends is a bath, and he gives the baths. He gets clients that request them from ages twenty-five and up, men and women. No children. He uses like about that much of each plant to make the bath. So I would say that it's kind of like he says-like a bunch. Like when you grab a parsley bunch.

S1: So just a bunch of leaves stocked together?

CH: Yeah. He says you just grab a bunch of them and that is what you combine to make the bath. Afterwards he takes an egg and rolls it over a person in the sign of the cross, and then takes the bunch of plants and does that with the plants.

Jones: O.k.

CH: Do you have an example of someone that you treated with this condition- someone who was fatigued?

S1: Yeah, my sister.

CH: Why was she so tired?

S1: She was always really tired because she works cleaning houses. So they make her clean windows, bathrooms, and so she would come here really depressed with her eyes almost closed. She is in her forties, and she would get home and be extremely tired. So that worked well for her.

CH: How many times did she come?

S1: Quite a few times. Every time she needed it.

CH: So then every time a person feels this kind of fatigue this bath should be done?

S1: Yes.

C. talking to Jones: So he says you do that bath every time that you feel that tiredness. His most recent example is his sister, who is a housekeeper in Malibu and they make her do a lot of hard work like clean big windows and everything. She is in her forties and she gets really tired from working so hard so sometimes she comes home and she's just ready to drop so he says that works good for her.

CH: Have you worked with people with mental problems?

S1: Very few.

CH: Do you have an example of one of those people?

S1: Yes, two people that have gotten cured.

CH: What kind of treatment did you prescribe?

S1: I first recommend a bath. Someone with a mental problem means they are crazy. I take four chicken eggs, four duck eggs, break them, and sit the person on this stuff so that the person absorbs this through the anus. So you beat the eggs, put them in a cloth, fold it, and put it on the person's head, and that should cure them.

CH: How long does the treatment last?

S1: Around three weeks.

CH: In three weeks a person can be cured of mental problems?

S1: Yes.

CH: Have you used this treatment on anyone?

S1: Yes I have.

CH: Male or female?

S1: Male.

CH: So people suffering from mental problems do come in to see you?

S1: A few.

CH: I have heard that sometimes what seems to be a mental problem is a spiritual problem too.

S1: Definitely. There are different kinds of mental illness. For example, some mental illnesses are due to the abuse of drugs that cause some to develop abnormal behaviors and get crazy. You have people that abuse alcohol, or that live with a lot of stress that go mad. Sometimes there are people that have suffered a lot of stress from problems at home or at work and from so much thinking and thinking, they go crazy.

CH: So those are the different types of madness a person can suffer?

S1: Yes, that I know of.

CH: But this is not an illness that you regularly treat?

S1: No, I really do not deal with that.

**C. talking to Jones:** He says he has treated mental illness. He can only think of two cases here. It's not something that he treats often, though people do ask for it occasionally. He treated a man, in which case, he was like a little bit crazy. He says what it is, it's not-it's craziness but due to debilitation of the mind, like if he's had too many problems at home, or work, and everything just gets to him and the person gets delusional, and so that would be what people consider crazy. He says what he does for that, is that you have to take five chicken eggs, five duck eggs, and puts them in some sort of a container. Then, the person has to sit in that and the stuff gets absorbed into their skin, and when it becomes absorbed, then, that is the remedy. What you do is you take the eggs and you beat them, and you put them in a cloth. Then, you take that cloth, fold it, and you put it on his head. That should cure him within a three weeks time. He said there are different types of mental illness. You can have mental illness like if you were a drunkard-after a while you just lose it, or if you do drugs. After a while, you just lose it. If you have a lot of stress at home or work, lots of different kinds of problems

like that, then this can cause mental debilitation also. All of these different things are treated in the way that he said.

Jones: Is he familiar with Schizophrenia, bipolar personalities?

C.H: Bipolar personality?

Jones: Manic depressive.

CH: Are you familiar with schizophrenia, and do you know people that suffer from depression caused by mental illness?

S1: Yes, this can be caused by different things. For example, menopause can cause this condition in women. Some women suffer from hot flashes and get so depressed that they sometimes get suicidal. They often do not want to see or talk to anyone. But I don't really deal with that.

CH: Are you familiar with the kind of treatment that would help to alleviate that condition?

S1: Yes, but I rather not deal with that.

C.H. talking to Jones: He says that he is familiar with schizophrenia and manic depression. He says that is something people get like if they are going through menopause or something like that. When women are going through menopause they get the hot flashes and they just get so depressed, they can't even stand themselves, and sometimes they even want to kill themselves because they just get so depressed. He says that he doesn't deal with that-he just doesn't get into that-but he says that's why they get that manic depression because the menopause process.

Jones: What about anorexia and bolemia?

CH: Are you familiar with the illness described as when people think they are fat but are really not? When these people eat, they eat well but then they go to the bathroom and throw up- something known as anorexia.

S1: No.

CH: How about when people have a pattern of eating a lot and then they make themselves vomit, and maybe do not eat anything at all for days until they can't stand it anymore and then they go back to bingeing. It's like a mental and physical disorder.

S1: It is a mental and physical deficiency, but no, I don't treat that.

CH: Have you ever treated mouth infections such as cold sores or gum disease?

S1: Yes. You treat that with oak bark (*encino*). You boil the bark and you use it as a poultice (*fomentos*). It tightens your teeth and prevents you from getting cavities, and it reduces the swelling.

CH: What is a (*fomento*)?

S1: A (*fomento*) is basically when you use a cloth that is infused with a warm liquid and place it directly to an area that you are treating.

C. talking to Jones: He says that what he uses for mouth infections, which now I recall we have discussed, is oak bark (*cascara de encino*) which is the bark of the oak, (*encino*). It is something you find here. Tadin carries it. He says that what you do is you take that, boil it into a tea, and you put it on a cloth, and then you just go like this to your mouth in the affected area. This should tighten your teeth and remove the swelling.

CH: Do you treat (*fuegos*) mouth sores the same way?

S1: No, for that you use (*la piedra alumbre*) or you can use lemon and baking soda.

CH: If you have a canker sore, what you do is you take lemon and baking soda and you rub it on the affected area.

S1: You have to rub it hard. You have to let it bleed so that the infection is extracted.

C. talking to Jones: Or you can take the alum (*alumbre*) rock, I'll show it to you, and you just rub it in the affected area.

Jones: Ask him if there are any other mouth related infections we don't know about?

CH: Are there any other mouth infections that we don't know about?

S1: Well sometimes people have too much heat in their bodies and they may get little bubbles inside the mouth. You treat this the same way. I treated a lot of people with this problem in Guatemala. Here, people don't really come in to get treated for this problem.

CH: Have you treated people with obesity problems?

S1: No, well actually, there is something for that-for people that are very fat like myself (laughs). You take an eggplant, chop it up, and put it in a big jar. Then, you drink all the juice that comes out of that. You have to drink it all day. In fifteen days you will lose 60 pounds.

Jones: Do you squeeze it in the jar?

S1: No, you just chop it up into chunks and use the liquid that seeps out of it.

CH: Have we talked about pneumonia?

S1: Yeah we did.

CH: Tuberculosis?



S1: I don't treat that.

CH: Do you treat hemorrhoids?

S1: You just take pork lard and spread it on the affected area to make the swelling go down. You can also use a green grease- the one you use for your hair, and mix it with the pork lard and apply it directly to the affected area. Now here is a secret- you can use monkey hide. When there is sun out, a person (the person has to be nude) can sit on the hairy side of the monkey's hide.

CH: So these are treatments that are known to work but that he does not practice here. How about for hiccups?

S1: You can treat it by lying down and closing your mouth and holding your breath. This can get rid of hiccups. Another thing that can be done is you can scare the person with the hiccups to get rid of the hiccups. You can also give the person a raw potato shake. You take around three raw potatoes and blend them very well and give it to the person to drink. Sometimes you get hick-ups because your stomach is hot, so you just have to cool it.

CH: Do you add something to the potato when you blend it?

S1: You just put a little bit of olive oil and water.

Jones: Can you explain the concept of a hot stomach? When does your stomach get hot?

S1: It means that sometimes a person is not digesting food properly. This can happen if the person eats something bad. When this happens a person's stomach might swell up. This can also happen due to getting really mad, which then may cause the stomach to become hot and swollen.

Jones: Examples of eating something bad?

S1: eating a lot of hot peppers, coffee, and too much soda. There are many things that can cause you to have a hot stomach.

Jones: Is there such a thing as a cold stomach?

S1: When you feel pain in your stomach then you know that your stomach is cold. Age and carelessness can affect your stomach. When you get old, your stomach doesn't function as well. For example, my father can no longer eat chicken late in the evening because his stomach will start hurting or he might vomit. Also, sometimes he can't eat pork meat because he cannot digest it well. His stomach is too cold and that's what causes the pain and the cramps.

CH: Is there a way you can prevent getting a cold stomach?

S1: You can add certain condiments like, garlic, cloves, sweet marjoram, and cumin to your food to warm up the stomach?

CH: How much of the condiments should be used?

S1: You can add a head of garlic- about three clove heads or three of cumin in your food. You can also put a little bit of sweet marjoram in your food. This should help to prevent you from getting a cold stomach.

CH: What can I do now to prevent myself from getting a cold stomach in the future, that is when I am older?

S1: You have to be careful and eat three meals a day at regular hours.

CH: What kinds of foods should I eat more or less of?

S1: Well, I deal with mostly Latin people, and Latin people eat everything-they have no limit. The most important thing to do is to eat at regular hours, also not to eat things that you don't like, that you find unappealing because this can disturb your stomach.

Jones: Are there any other ways in which the concept of "hot" and "cold" are important in regard to the body? In getting sick, preventing getting sick? For example, he mentioned back, and wind. Are there any other parts of the body that are subject to becoming "hot" or "cold" and how do you prevent this from happening?

S1: Well, when the weather is cold, like it is now, arthritis is very common among people. During this season it gets so cold that some people complaint of stiff fingers because of the cold. Sometimes it even prevents them from walking. And this happens to everyone, even to young people.

CH: What is this due to?

S1: You know that for my healings I use oils. I massage the stomach, the back, and I treat injuries through massage. When I am working, I don't wash my hands. Also, for example, if you are ironing, and then wash your hands with cold water, this causes arthritis. Arthritis is very common among people that sew and iron for a living-because they go from hot to cold. Another thing is some women take risks by having sex soon after they have a baby (sometimes within a week), instead of waiting the amount of time that they're supposed to.

CH: Can this cause women to catch air in the womb, or what happens?

S1: The woman's body becomes hot, and the womb may fall out of place. Also, the stomach may catch cold and this may cause the person not to be able to conceive again.

C. talking to Jones: So there are two things that we just discussed that are affected by cold and hot. One would be arthritis. The reason why people are so affected is because they go from hot to cold. For example, if you are sewing something, and using your hands constantly, and your hands are constantly working, or if you are massaging, like him for example, he has protruding little veins-because he massages a lot with hot oils. So, he has a hot going on in his hands, and if he goes from there to go wash his hands in

cool water, or room temperature water, then that is not good. That will affect him and cause him to have arthritis, and the same goes for everybody else. For example, like somebody who irons a lot-that is an exercise, a constant hot process. If you are working on a sewing machine-then you have a constant working with your feet. So, if you go from hot to cold if you go and wash your hands, or you step into the cold, then that is how you get arthritis. The other thing is when women who don't take good care of themselves after childbirth. For example, when women have given birth, if they have sex right away instead of waiting the amount of time they are supposed to wait, then their matrix will drop or fall. He says that this causes the body to generate a lot of heat, and that affects them negatively.

He said that some of the effects of premature sex after childbirth are the fallen matrix, varicose veins, and a bulging stomach that you will not be able to get rid of because you are generating a lot of heat and also ingesting air and it gets stuck in the stomach and causes the bulge to remain. He says that there are some drops in Guatemala, that they give you-that if you take right away, it'll get rid of the air. But if you don't, then the air gets stuck, or if you take it too late, it doesn't affect you anyway-the air stays there and that is why some women continue to have a big bulge after childbirth.

Jones: Does he know what is in the drops?

S1: No, I don't know. It is a pharmaceutical.

CH: Are there any herbs women should take after they give birth that will benefit them and their baby?

### **Tape becomes kind of blurry.**

S1 mentions some kind of beer shake and chicken soup (from an old hen) taken every day.

S1: In western American culture there is a lot of carelessness that goes on. For example, some women who give birth go out into the street the same day. In Guatemala women that are pregnant do not take full baths. They wash, but they do not bathe because it is considered to be bad. Taking baths can cause pregnant women to contract a fever. I tell you this, because I know family members who have died due to this. Over there, if you become ill, it is very costly to call on an ambulance, and if you are taken by car you are in for a very bumpy ride. Women who have problems with the natural birth process sometimes contract a fever commonly known as "corporal," because they wait, sometimes as long as three days, in hopes that they will be able to give birth naturally. This fever enters from the bottom and causes the person to have a rapid death.

CH: The woman or the baby?

S1: Both.

C. talking to Jones: He says one problem in Guatemala that affects pregnant women is that if they don't get to the hospital soon enough when they are in labor-if they are trying to avoid operation or something, and they don't get to the hospital soon enough, they catch a fever that enters you from the bottom up, and it kills your baby and you, and it's

called “corporal.” It’s like a fever and you die right away if you don’t get to the hospital right away- if you don’t get to the hospital soon enough. He says that there are certain things that you do and you don’t do when you’re pregnant. He says that you’re supposed to have chicken broth daily and it has to be Creole chicken, and once you have had your baby, you have to have a big bowl of this soup, which is made from an old hen. Also, you are not supposed to do anything for a couple of days. You have to rest. He says that’s the big mistake they do here- that you have your baby today and tomorrow you’re up and running, you know. So, you have to abide by these rules, so that you heal properly and your body goes back to normal and so forth.

Jones: Do you know what foods are considered hot, and are considered cold?

S1: Many, but I can’t really name all of them.

CH: For example, my mother has told me that it is not good to drink coconut milk at night.

S1: Yes, because that would make you sick to your stomach. Also, eating late at night, that is after 10, makes the stomach cold and causes inflammation. This is not good at all.

CH: Is there a way a person can prevent bad spirits from affecting him or her?

S1: By wearing an amulet.

CH: Does a person need to go to someone like your self to have an amulet made?

S1: You can buy it in a place like this or the person can have a “**rayado**” done which is performed with eggs.

CH: What is a “**rayado**?”

S1: It is the process of taking an egg and passing it in the form of the cross throughout your body.

CH: A raw egg?

S1: Yes, without cracking the egg, and afterwards you discard the egg.

CH: He says that what you can do is you can take an egg, if you want to protect yourself from evil spirits. You take an egg, you don’t break it, you don’t crack it, and you just pass it all over your body while making the sign of the cross, and you throw it out, or you can go to someone like him and get an amulet.

CH: What kinds of material do you use to make an amulet? Is that something you can discuss?

S1: Yes. When preparing an amulet one has to pray in the name of the person who will be using the amulet. It is prepared in such a way that it will bring the person good luck in love, and money matters, and other stuff. Some things that can be used are “**colorines**,”

which are little, red, Guatemalan beans that can be mixed with quicksilver (*azogue*), magnets (*iman*), small quartz rocks, and a little bit of rue. You can add a picture of your patron saint or virgin, a cross, or a scapulary (*escapulario*). All of these things are made into an amulet that can be used for protection.

CH: Where do “*colorines*” originate from?

S1: From Guatemala. They are found in different countries but they look a little different.

Jones: We’ve been for almost an hour, you might ask him how his time is.

CH: Do we have more time to continue?

S1: I think this is enough already.

CH: Can I ask you one more thing? What are the bottles with the pink stuff hanging out there that look like kool aide?

S1: It is cured sugar- and it’s for love spells.

CH: You make that stuff here?

S1: Yes.

CH: Can people buy it here?

S1: Yes.

END OF TRANSCRIPT